



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

No. CXXXI.

---

APRIL, 1846.

---

- ART. I. — 1. *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third.* By HORACE WALPOLE, EARL OF ORFORD, youngest Son of Sir Robert Walpole. Now first published from the original MSS. Edited, with Notes, by SIR DENIS LE MARCHANT, Bart. Vols. III. and IV. London: Richard Bentley. 1845. 8vo.
2. *Sir Henry Cavendish's Debates of the House of Commons during the Thirteenth Parliament of Great Britain, commonly called the Unreported Parliament.* Drawn up from the original Manuscripts, by J. WRIGHT, Editor of the Parliamentary History of England. London: Longmans. 2 vols. 8vo. 1841-43.

THE remainder of Walpole's work has appeared since the publication of our last volume. It does not materially differ in character from what went before. Perhaps there may be a little languor perceptible, after the time when the author decided to retire from parliament. Disgusted at finding that he could not make a great man out of General Conway, and weary of following a course of life in which he had long given up all hope of personal success, he determined to withdraw at the close of the twelfth parliament, in 1768. Here, too, his first intention seems to have been to terminate these Memoirs. But his natural fondness for writing having got the better of him, he resumed his work for the purpose of bringing it down to the period of the pacification with Spain in 1771, when, as he says, "not only all the foreign quarrels of the country were terminated, but when the court had surmounted every domestic difficulty,

had pacified the colonies and Ireland, and had little to disturb them but their own indiscretion." Whether the state of things which he thus describes did or did not last long enough to justify his preference of this as an era over that of "his own dereliction from politics," it is not, perhaps, worth while to inquire. We can scarcely help suspecting that he had more in his mind a correspondence in length of time between his two books of *Memoirs*. Taken together, they will not be without their value to students of the British annals during a quarter of a century, making twelve years of two successive reigns, although to Americans it is a little provoking that they should stop at the precise moment when, to them at least, the history becomes most interesting.

We left off in our notice at the time when Lord Chatham yet remained at the head of the ministry, though shut up in a state of total seclusion from the world. Some of his good-natured friends, of whom every distinguished man has his share, believed him mad; others, less charitably disposed, averred that he was feigning illness to get rid of a difficult situation. Walpole, after leaning first to one and then to the other hypothesis, now gives us the stories in circulation which favored the idea of his insanity. He was extravagant in buying out neighbours at his country-place of Hayes; he paid no regard to time or cost in procuring and planting trees, causing them to be set even at night by torchlight; he could not bear the noise made by his children, and had a gallery built to shut it off; he had a succession of chickens boiling and roasting every hour, to be ready whenever he should be hungry; and lastly, having sold his favorite country-seat at Hayes when he obtained possession of Burton Pynsent, he soon repented the act and begged its restoration. Such proof as this, even in these days of liberal construction, would scarcely be deemed sufficient to procure the acquittal of a criminal upon the plea of insanity. It is enough, however, to show that the retirement of Lord Chatham from active business was grounded upon real cause. Walpole adds, that "the few reports of the few who had access to him concurred in representing him as sedate, conversable, even cheerful, till any mention was made of politics; then he started, fell into tremblings, and the conversation was broken off." The truth probably is, that his disease had fallen upon his nerves, and any thing that agitated them

rendered him unfit for useful action. We think this the best and most natural explanation of his singular condition. It will serve, too, to account for the delay which took place in his resignation. He was probably the last person in England to give up the hope that he might recover whilst he remained in office.

In the mean time, the situation of affairs was in the highest degree anomalous. The ministry, which had been formed out of the most heterogeneous materials, remained united only by the *prestige* of Lord Chatham's name. His own few immediate followers, at his express desire, continued at their posts, long after it had fallen away from his principles and had deserted his policy. The reins had fallen into the hands of the Duke of Grafton, an indolent and dissipated nobleman, gratified by the possession of power, but incapable of the labor necessary to retain it. With him were joined, as leaders in the House of Commons, General Conway, unsteady and wavering, though with the best intentions, and Charles Townshend, even more fickle than Conway, with less respectability of character to compensate for that weakness; the one, infirm of purpose from mere want of energy to resist opposition, — the other, vacillating as a weathercock because he neither cared nor knew how to be otherwise. Behind these stood the courtiers, always ready to give to public affairs the aspect of the royal will. The consequence of a combination like this may readily be conjectured. There being nobody to lay down a system of action for the whole administration, each member did pretty much as he liked. No one felt responsible for acts which he did not approve. Neither was there sufficient cohesion to secure even a uniformity of opinion before the world. In the public mind there was no confidence whatever in the stability of such an administration. It seemed almost as if a breath could blow it over. And yet, strange as it may seem, this weak and wavering ministry, with a few unimportant modifications, kept on from month to month for a period nearly three times as long as any of its better constructed predecessors of this reign.

Two circumstances conspired to produce this result; the first, the utter inability of the several factions in opposition to unite upon a common system of measures, or to agree upon a common head; the second, and the more impor-

tant of the two, the active interposition of the king. The state of things, if not in all respects what he could wish, yet had its attractions for him. It saved him from what he most disliked, the dictation of aristocratic combinations like the Rockingham or Grenville parties, whilst it did not subject him to the sway of a single superior mind such as that of Chatham. George the Third had by this time matured into manhood, had acquired experience of public affairs, and a great share of confidence in the correctness of his own opinions. The influence of Lord Bute, however great over him at the beginning of his reign, had been steadily declining ever since, and was now certainly at an end. His early wish had been to be a king more than in name, and now he was gratified. From 1766 to 1782, the government may with more propriety be styled that of George Guelph than that of the Duke of Grafton or of Lord North. For whatever of unpopularity then, or of discredit since, has attached to the management of affairs, the king ought to be held responsible. His was the persecution of John Wilkes ; his the war of the American Revolution. The Duke of Grafton would not have countenanced the one, nor Lord North have favored the other measure, if the power of the court had not overborne their faculty of resistance. This truth, although frequently asserted by the opposition at the time, has not gained full credence until a very late period.

The first act of this new drama was performed through the agency of the brilliant but eccentric Charles Townshend. Notwithstanding Lord Chatham, the nominal premier, had thundered against the Stamp Act, even to the extent of denying *in toto* the power of parliament to tax the Colonies ; notwithstanding his friends, Lord Camden, Lord Shelburne, and General Conway, were in leading official situations ; notwithstanding every member of the cabinet had decided against the measure ; this gentleman, as chancellor of the exchequer, rose in his place, and deliberately proposed to the House of Commons a bill to lay duties on glass, lead, painters' colors, tea, and paper, imported into the American provinces. Not a great while before, he had himself voted to put a stop to this sort of policy by repealing the stamp duty ; now, he was in his speech for pushing it even further than he went by his bill. For he gave broad intimations of more action of the same kind in future, by way

of penalty upon such of the Colonies as might prove refractory or disobedient. These acts, so opposite in character, are both traceable to the same motive,—a motive, it may be remarked, which is the source of much of the political inconsistency of the present day,—the desire to embody the opinion immediately prevailing at a particular moment. Though the ministry disapproved, it was clear that both king and people united to instigate the proceeding. There was in the national mind a predominating sense of discontent with what was deemed to have been a weak concession made to the resistance of the Colonies, and nowhere was this feeling stronger than in the circles of an aristocratic parliament. Even the most liberal of the opposition were not entirely free from it, and its influence is distinctly visible throughout the struggle with America. In good truth, the British people, though possessed of many really estimable qualities, are not remarkable for their suavity of treatment of persons living out of the limits of the fast-anchored isle, and most particularly of those whom they deem in any way their inferiors. They have always shown themselves supercilious to the inhabitants of their colonies. Perhaps in this they only betray the tendency of human nature everywhere, as Walpole rather pointedly remarks in the following passage.

*“Authority never measures liberty downwards. Rarely is liberty supposed to mean the independence of those below us; it is our own freedom from the yoke of superiors. The peer dreads the king, the commoner the peer, the Americans the parliament. Each American trader thought himself a Brutus, a Hampden, while he wrestled with the House of Commons; yet his poor negroes felt that their master Brutus was a worse tyrant than Nero or Muley Ishmael. Had the parliament of England presumed by one godlike act to declare all the slaves in our colonies freemen, not a patriot in America but would have clamored against the violation of property, and protested that to abolish the power of imposing chains was to impose them. O man! man! dare not to vaunt your virtue, while self-interest lurks in every pore!”*—Vol. III., pp. 33, 34.

The feeling explained in this extract construed the remonstrance of the American colonists against the Stamp Act as downright rebellion to constituted authority, and the repeal of the act as a cowardly yielding of principle to violence.

No one shared more largely in this feeling than the king himself. Thus the two great sources to which Townshend habitually looked as guides to his career united in prompting him to a restoration of the ancient policy. On the other hand, the objections to it were to be found in his own consistency, to which he never paid any regard, and in the dissent of his colleagues in the ministry, whom he was ambitious to supplant. Townshend was a shining but a very flickering light, with aspirations vastly out of proportion to his judgment. In this respect, he differed little from a character of some notoriety for many years in the United States ; we mean the late John Randolph of Roanoke. Both of them were extraordinarily gifted with the power of fascinating popular deliberative assemblies, both were impelled by an extravagant ambition for power, without possessing the qualities by which alone it may be wielded with success, and both were utterly regardless alike of individual and of public consistency. A striking illustration of these peculiarities in Townshend will be found in the following account given by Walpole of a speech made by him upon a motion to regulate the dividends of the East India Company ; an account which will, in some of its parts, recall Randolph to the recollection of those still living, who ever heard him.

“ It was on that day, and on that occasion, that Charles Townshend displayed in a latitude beyond belief the amazing powers of his capacity, and the no less amazing incongruities of his character. He had taken on himself, early in the day, the examination of the Company's conduct ; and in a very cool, sensible speech on that occasion, and with a becoming consciousness of his own levity, had told the House that he hoped he had atoned for the inconsideration of his past life by the care he had taken of that business. He had scarce uttered this speech, but, as if to atone for that (however false) atonement, he left the House and went home to dinner, not concerning himself with Dyson's motion that was to follow. As that motion was, however, of a novel nature, it produced suspicion, objection, and difficulties. Conway being pressed, and not caring to be the sole champion of an invidious measure, that was in reality not only in Townshend's province, but which he had had a principal hand in framing, sent for him back to the House. He returned about eight in the evening, half drunk with champagne, and more intoxicated with spirits. He rose to speak without giving himself time to learn, and without caring, what had been in agitation, except that the

motion had given an alarm. The first thing he did was to call God to witness that he had not been consulted on the motion,—a confession implying that he was not consulted on a business in his own department; and the more marvellous, as the disgrace of which he seemed to complain or boast of was absolutely false. There were sitting round him twelve persons who had been in consultation with him that very morning, and with his assistance had drawn up the motion on his own table, and who were petrified at this most unparalleled effrontery, and causeless want of truth. When he sat down again, Conway asked him softly, how he could affirm so gross a falsehood. He replied carelessly, 'I thought it would be better to say so'; but before he sat down, he had poured forth a torrent of wit, parts, humor, knowledge, absurdity, vanity, and fiction, heightened by all the graces of comedy, the happiness of allusion and quotation, and the buffoonery of farce. To the purpose of the question he said not a syllable. It was a descant on the times, a picture of parties, of their leaders, of their hopes, and defects. It was an encomium and a satire on himself; and while he painted the pretensions of birth, riches, connections, favor, titles; while he affected to praise Lord Rockingham, and that faction, and yet insinuated that nothing but parts like his own were qualified to preside; and while he less covertly arraigned the wild incapacity of Lord Chatham, he excited such murmurs of wonder, admiration, applause, laughter, pity, and scorn, that nothing was so true as the sentence with which he concluded, when speaking of government; he said it was become what he himself had often been called, a weathercock.

"Such was the wit, abundance, and impropriety of this speech, that for some days men could talk or inquire of nothing else. 'Did you hear Charles Townshend's champagne speech?' was the universal question. For myself, I protest it was the most singular pleasure of the kind I ever tasted. The bacchanalian enthusiasm of Pindar flowed in torrents less rapid and less eloquent, and inspires less delight, than Townshend's imagery, which conveyed meaning in every sentence. It was Garrick writing and acting extempore scenes of Congreve. A light circumstance increased the mirth of the audience. In the fervor of speaking, Townshend rubbed off the patch from his eye, which he had represented as grievously cut three days before; no mark was discernible, but to the nearest spectators a scratch so slight, that he might have made, and perhaps had made it himself with a pin. To me the entertainment of the day was complete. He went to supper with us at Mr. Conway's, where, the flood of his gayety not being exhausted, he kept the table in a roar till two in



the morning, by various sallies and pictures, the last of which was a scene in which he mimicked inimitably his own wife and another great lady with whom he fancied himself in love, and both whose foibles and manner he counterfeited to the life. Mere lassitude closed his lips at last, not the want of wit and new ideas." — Vol. III., pp. 23–27.

The editor has endeavoured to soften the harsher colors of this picture by quoting the memoirs of a contemporary, which deny the drunkenness, and affirm the reality of the wound over the eye as having been caused by a fall out of bed in a fit of epilepsy. We are not sure that by this he mends the matter much for Townshend. Drunkenness can never be made to excuse folly, but it certainly palliates the guilt of premeditated intent. If this gentleman was sober, when he began his speech with a falsehood, continued it in a tone of derision towards his colleagues in the government, whom it was his duty to protect, and closed the evening by turning a female friend as well as the wife of his bosom into ridicule for the amusement of boon companions at a supper-table, shall we think any better of Charles Townshend as a man for that? Whether drunk or sober, there seems scarcely a choice for the benefit of his character. Yet such was the individual who in his day was the idol of the House of Commons, whom Lord Chatham almost commanded to become his chancellor of the exchequer, and whom Burke made the subject of a too favorable pencil in one of his immortal orations. Fortunately, perhaps, for the fame of Townshend, death interposed between him and his highest hopes, and prevented his proving to the world our author's rather sweeping assertion, that he was wanting in "common truth, common sincerity, common honesty, common modesty, common steadiness, common courage, and common sense."

Parliament was dissolved, and with it terminated the political life of our author; but in judging the continuation of these *Memoirs*, which he admits to have been made more than before from accounts given at second hand, we are much aided by Sir Henry Cavendish's report of debates in the next parliament, yet in course of publication, the title of which work has been prefixed to the present article. This work certainly goes far to corroborate the statements of fact made by him, though of course it leaves his inferences and his judg-

ments to stand just where they were. The history of the time increases in interest. Rarely had there been in England a more animated canvass for seats in the House of Commons. Wealthy people impaired even their enormous fortunes in the contest ; and all for what ? The old party lines were thoroughly broken up. There were no public questions of all-absorbing interest to divide the sentiments of the electors. Even the Wilkes fever had abated, upon the removal of its object to the continent. Yet the desire to get into parliament had seldom been more strong. For this there is but a single explanation. The value of a seat was never estimated so exclusively by the standard of selfish advantage. The several factions, struggling for power with nearly equal chances of success, depended mainly upon the number of adherents each could muster in the House of Commons for the share of weight to which they might respectively be entitled in any combination that could be agreed upon. The effect was made visible, through the whole of the parliament, in the tone of all the debates and the character of all its proceedings. Few of its predecessors in later times had shown themselves so arbitrary in temper, or at once so regardless of the people, so obsequious to the crown.

With diffidence, and not until after some hesitation, Lord North consented to take the post of chancellor of the exchequer, and the lead of the House. He was probably the first minister in the reign who had really suited the taste of his master. Not being very ambitious, he excited little or no jealousy ; whilst his qualities of steadiness, good-temper, attention to business, and decided courage, in all of which the Duke of Grafton was somewhat deficient, secured the sovereign's confidence. To a man like George the Third, the brilliant and lofty style of Chatham was oppressive, the dry and minute accuracy of George Grenville fatiguing. He wanted a minister to whom he was not afraid of expressing his own wishes, and who would not endlessly argue with him in opposition to their execution. Just such a person was Lord North, conceding when in the closet, in his own office attentive, in his place in parliament ready in debate, and in his tactics daring. It was, however, the courage of indifference and not of calculation. To him it was nothing, that the best orators stormed within and the populace hooted without the walls. Never was minister

more violently assailed with smaller effect in irritating his temper. His disregard of popularity, perhaps the greatest of his defects as a statesman, whilst it encouraged opposition, made him perhaps the most difficult of men to encounter. How much he made a merit of this is visible in the following speech of his, reported by Sir Henry Cavendish, in which he actually boasts that he had uniformly opposed popular views.

“Upon this system,” he says, “I have ever been against popular measures. I supported the cider tax with a view to the ease of the people; and I afterwards opposed the repeal of the tax,—a vote of which I have never repented. In 1765, I was for the American Stamp Act; the propriety of passing which I took very much upon the authority of the right honorable gentleman” (G. Grenville, now in opposition); “and when, in the following year, a bill was brought in for the repeal of that act, I directly opposed it; for I saw the danger of the repeal. And when again, in the year 1767, it was thought necessary to relieve the people from the pressure of taxation, by lessening the revenue to the extent of half a million, I was against that measure also. Then appeared on the public stage a strange phenomenon, an individual grown by the popularity of the times to be a man of consequence. I moved the expulsion of Mr. Wilkes. Every subsequent proceeding against that man I have supported; and I will again vote for his expulsion, if he again attempt to take his seat in this House. In all my memory, therefore, I do not recollect a single popular measure I ever voted for; no, not even the *nullum tempus* bill. I was even against declaring the law in the case of general warrants. I state this to prove that I am not an ambitious man. Men may be popular without being ambitious; but there is rarely an ambitious man who does not try to be popular.” — Vol. 1., p. 300.

Such was the frank declaration of him upon whom was about to devolve the responsibility of carrying into effect a long series of arbitrary and unpopular measures; and it must be confessed that upon no one could it more fitly fall. But though this temper accommodated itself well to the views of the king, and found a ready response in a servile majority in parliament, it was ill calculated to soothe a rising power in the country which it was neither wise nor statesman-like utterly to despise. Burke very justly observed at the time, in one of his pamphlets, that “the temper of the people amongst whom he presides ought to be the first study of a

statesman." It certainly was the last with Lord North. Though the walls of St. Stephens might resound with nightly cheers of a determined ministerial majority, it would have been better for the nation if less opportunity had been given to excite elsewhere shouts of a very different description. It happened that there was one man who had sagacity enough to make his fortune upon this supercilious behaviour. That man was John Wilkes, the person alluded to, singularly enough, in the speech, as having "grown *by the popularity of the times* to be a man of consequence." So little does the speaker, in using this phrase, seem to have been conscious, that the very policy which he was so distinctly enunciating as his own constituted the whole secret of that popularity which made Wilkes a man of consequence enough to brave with success the whole force of ministerial indignation.

John Wilkes appears to us, at this day, rather an ordinary man ; a soldier of fortune ; a demagogue of not even the first water ; much such a person as may be yearly found on a smaller scale warmed into political life by a single ray of popular sunshine, in the United States. He was by many of his contemporaries, both in Europe and America, esteemed as the very impersonation of all that is noble and patriotic in history. A curious illustration of this may be found in a late volume of Mr. Sparks's Library of American Biography. In a note to an interesting memoir of one of the noble spirits of the Revolution, the paymaster-general, William Palfrey, it is stated, that, when making an inventory of his effects left in Boston, he came to an article which he could not appraise ; the entry was "One oval plaster of Paris, of John Wilkes, Esq., given me by his sister, *inestimable*." Such was the belief of the purest patriots of both continents. Yet if we examine the foundation upon which Wilkes could unassisted have built so splendid a reputation, we shall find it utterly insufficient. The son of respectable parents, and not ill educated, he began life by driving from his house, on account of his reckless debauchery, a woman of character and fortune whom he had early married. Though he had stripped her of every thing that he could lay his hands on, he soon found himself needing further means to maintain himself in his profligate career. Following the not very unusual round long ago forcibly depicted by the Roman historian, "*igitur primo pecuniæ, deinde imperii cupido crevit*," his

extravagance first brought him to want, and his want next drove him into politics. He attached himself to Lord Temple, one of the most factious of the nobility; and having completed his own ruin by rushing into the expenses of more than one election canvass before he could succeed in gaining a seat in parliament, he then set himself up for office at the hands of every administration, as his only resource. His aim for several years appears to have been to get the post of minister at Constantinople. Had this petition been granted, there can be little doubt that Wilkes would never have been heard of as a patriot. But in order to get this or any other position of consequence in England, one of two things is necessary; strength of aristocratic connection, which Wilkes had not, and could not hope to have, — or else great personal consequence, which, if he did not then possess it, he quickly resolved to acquire by the shortest road. Hence sprung the *North Briton*, which, catering to the lowest prejudices of the British people, soon made a name for its author by the unexampled boldness with which it assailed the highest characters in the land, — Lord Bute, the princess dowager, and even the sovereign himself.

In our preceding article we have sufficiently alluded to the series of subsequent events by force of which Wilkes actually became the man of consequence he desired to be. In all of them he found the hostility of ministers his most useful assistance. The wish to crush him led to the adoption of a series of measures which in principle put at hazard the personal safety of every private citizen in the kingdom. The judiciary interfered to condemn the use of general warrants in the case of Wilkes, and around the bench rallied the best part of England in his defence. His prosecution for the *North Briton*, and for the *Essay on Woman*, his duel and escape to France, his outlawry, and his expulsion from his seat in parliament, followed in quick succession. Then came the change of administration that brought in Lord Chatham and the Duke of Grafton, and the dissolution of parliament. These last events conspired with Wilkes's absence once more to throw him into the shade. He began to feel, that, in his desperate pecuniary circumstances, nothing was so dangerous as being forgotten. The vision of Constantinople was still flitting ever and anon over his imagination, and he once more offered to the administration to rest

upon this point his alternative of peace or war. "If the ministers do not find employment for me," he writes to his friend Cotes, "I am disposed to find employment for them." Lord Chatham, even though he had fought his battle in the case of general warrants, always treated the man with undisguised contempt, and refused to do any thing for him. Wilkes revenged himself by an abusive pamphlet, and by declaring war upon the Duke of Grafton, who had been most favorable to his claims. In this spirit he came back in the face of his outlawry, lost his election as a representative for the city of London, and, nothing daunted, immediately presented himself to the electors of the adjoining county of Middlesex, and was returned by them to parliament almost by acclamation.

Wilkes was now launched upon a new sea to be troubled by his arts. Sinking under the weight of a prodigious private debt, and with two prosecutions hanging over his head, the issue of which he could not doubt would be adverse to him, his only resource was to be found in provoking persecution. This did not disappoint his expectations. The king fell at once into the snare which he had laid. The Middlesex election and Wilkes's appearance at the Court of King's Bench had been attended with some rioting; but the opening of the first session of the new parliament was made memorable by the military, who shot down some of the mob. George the Third, incensed at the impudence of the man who was setting all London by the ears, pressed upon his unwilling ministers the necessity of immediate, vigorous action. Their inclination appears to have been to delay, in the hope of getting rid of the subject; but to this it was not the interest of Wilkes to consent. By a series of bold measures, highly irritating in their character, but unnecessary now to detail, he succeeded in cutting off from them all possibility of retreat. Urged on by the king, and by the great body of courtiers eager to show their devotion to his will, government at last consented to press the expulsion of Wilkes upon insufficient grounds; and this false step led gradually, by that sort of chain of consequences not unfrequently visible in the moral dispensation of the universe, to a succession of worse ones, until the House of Commons ended by forcing into the seat for Middlesex, in the place of Wilkes, a certain Colonel Luttrell, a person who had no more

legal right at the moment to represent the electors of that county in parliament than the king himself had.

Thus it was that in his prison, whilst suffering the penalty of the law for his libellous publication of the *North Briton*, and for his other and worse offence, John Wilkes was once more exalted to the highest pinnacle of popular favor. Ugly as he was, his picture was eagerly bought up by admirers far and near, and little China figures of him, some of which still remain in this vicinity as a reminiscence of those days, were to be found adorning patriot drawing-rooms on both sides of the Atlantic. Even to many of the female sex he became an object of adoration, although his shocking squint, his high cheek-bones, and lank figure by no means presented to their eyes the image of an Antinous or Apollo Belvidere. But though he was at no time of his life insensible to their charms, his present situation afforded him advantages of a wholly different kind, which he was not slow to seize. His name and Liberty became the rallying cry of all the patriot party throughout the British dominions. A society was organized in London, denominated Supporters of the Bill of Rights, and designed to sustain the cause of freedom, attacked in his person. Such was the enthusiasm of the moment, that a sum of money, amounting to nearly one hundred thousand dollars, was subscribed and actually paid in, the greater part of which went to cancel the enormous debts contracted by this man's profligate extravagance in preceding years. Fifteen hundred pounds sterling was contributed to this fund by the single colony of South Carolina. Yet, strange to say, Wilkes himself regarded all this as by no means an adequate compensation for his labors and sacrifices. To him old debts were of very small account in comparison with present expenditures, and he had accordingly the face to ask further from his political friends, that a permanent provision should be added for his future support.

How far a public man can go in drawing money out of the pockets of his admirers for his own benefit, without shocking their principles, we cannot of course pretend to pronounce. Wilkes's last demand very certainly cooled the ardor of the Society of the Bill of Rights, and ultimately caused its dissolution. Yet his popularity continued nearly as great in the city as ever. He became successively an alderman, a sheriff, and lord mayor, from which situation he was fortunate

enough to slide into the lucrative post of chamberlain. Patriotism with him, as it has been too often before and since, was synonymous with the desire to realize some valuable consideration, and on the whole he must be admitted to have driven no losing trade. If he did not gain the post at Constantinople by supporting government, he at least received a tolerable *quid pro quo* for opposing it. Neither did he suffer his opposition to embarrass him one moment longer than it continued to be profitable. When once established in a permanent situation, he seized an early opportunity to view public affairs in a new light. The city had for some time been torn to pieces by personal quarrels of his instigation. The coalition of Charles Fox and Lord North brought Wilkes very gracefully into the ranks of the king's friends. He was soon after found ready gravely to deplore the excesses of those misguided men who were weakening the bonds of government in France, and with the inimitable assurance which makes so remarkable a feature of his character, when the king one day at a levee alluded to Sergeant Glynn as his friend, a man who had generously fought his hardest battles for him in parliament and in the courts, he could reply to the remark, "Sire, Sergeant Glynn is not my friend. He was a Wilkite ; I never was."

Yet, though we must deny to Wilkes all merit for qualities of which in his lifetime he enjoyed the credit, he possessed others which will continue to make him an object of interest for all time. At a moment when the tendency of opinion was to more absolute doctrines in government, when the inrush of the old Tories upon a young and rather arbitrarily disposed sovereign had made the old Whig principles somewhat unfashionable, it required a man of cool daring and unconquerable energy to come forward and wage war in their defence. If Wilkes was wrong in his appeal to the low prejudices of the English against the Scotch, he was unquestionably right in his war upon general warrants, and in his struggle with the House of Commons, both in the case of Colonel Luttrell, and in that of the prosecution of Miller for printing the debates, as well as in his opposition to the impressment of seamen. Whatever we may think of the motives that swayed him, we can scarcely deny to him the merit of compelling the establishment of three great securities of liberty in England. Neither was he, though so great an



adept in demagogue arts, ill-natured or vindictive in the pursuit of the objects to be gained through those means. His mobs were called off, as soon as they showed symptoms of seriously exceeding their commission, which was merely to make him of importance. So long as they confined themselves to frightening obnoxious members of the nobility out of their coaches, or into illuminations for his success in Middlesex, or to marking the well known symbol, No. 45, upon the soles of a foreign ambassador's shoes, it was all well enough; but when they threatened to go further, and hazard bloodshed and destruction of property, Wilkes always labored, and generally with success, to check them. He had none of the ferocity that marked the track of the French agitators. He always loved his daughter, and carefully provided for his natural children. His disposition was kind and good, even though his principles were nothing. To him, his patriotism was the next best thing to being in favor with government and going to Constantinople. So, in private life, he was always ready to give to his friends more than actually belonged to him. He died leaving a will providing very generously for all his connections, — with the single drawback upon the merit of his action, that his estate proved upon examination to be wholly unequal to his liberality.

We have given more space than we could well spare to this account of Mr. Wilkes, because there is much in the character that we on this side of the Atlantic can be interested in. The race of men who view the doctrines of liberty only as the nearest road to place is prolific in America. It is well for us to examine how such persons figure in history. For the rest, Wilkes was rather too vulgar a hero to excite much of the attention of Walpole, who is at home in tracing the intrigues of a far more commonplace nobility. Yet he treats of him at large, in comparison with the notice he takes of the publications of Junius. The same silence is observable in his gossiping letters, which discuss almost every other event of his times. We subjoin the material passage of the *Memoirs*, which gives a tolerably just view of the most famous of these papers.

“ These many essays towards an insurrection were crowned by the unparalleled remonstrance of Junius to the king, the most daring insult ever offered to a prince but in times of open rebellion, and aggravated by the many truths it contained. Nothing

could exceed the singularity of this satire, but the impossibility of discovering the author. Three men were especially suspected, Wilkes, Edmund Burke, and William Gerard Hamilton. The desperate hardness of the author, in attacking men so great, so powerful, and some so brave, was reconcilable only to the situation of Wilkes; but the masterly talents that appeared in those writings were deemed superior to his abilities: yet in many of Junius's letters an inequality was observed; and even in this remonstrance different hands seemed to have been employed. The laborious flow of style, and fertility of matter, made Burke believed the real Junius: yet he had not only constantly and solemnly denied any hand in those performances, but was not a man addicted to bitterness; nor could any one account for such indiscriminate attacks on men of such various descriptions and professions. Hamilton was most generally suspected. He, too, denied it, — but his truth was not renowned. The quick intelligence of facts, and the researches into the arcana of every office, were far more uncommon than the invectives; and men wondered how any one possessed of such talents could have the forbearance to write in a manner so desperate as to prevent his ever receiving personal applause for his writings: the venom was too black not to disgrace even his ashes." — Vol. III., pp. 401, 402.

The prevailing opinion in England seems to be that Sir Philip Francis was the author of these papers. We should be more ready to credit it, if he had never written any thing under his own name. Waiving, however, all endeavour to solve that enigma, let us confine ourselves to a brief examination of the letters themselves. It has become a fashion of modern writers, among whom Lord Brougham has led the way, to depreciate their substance, and even the style in which they are written. There is this marked difference observable between Wilkes and Junius, that while the former used his invective only as an instrument to exalt his own position, the other seems to have concealed his condition only for the purpose of giving full scope to his malignity. The one was an ordinary demagogue impelled by motives easily understood; those of the other remain yet shrouded in mystery. The style of the *North Briton* is scarcely readable at the present day; that of Junius, like that of Louis de Montalte, still remains in our own opinion unapproached in the language, and even now throws an interest over obsolete disputes. We are aware that several late publications made by the friends of those who were the main objects of his shafts

have caused something of a reaction in their favor, and have very much weakened the public confidence in the justice of his invective. It is not our design to vindicate him from objections that seem well founded ; but reactions seldom have their just limits, and there is danger of their effects in the present instance. After making all the deductions that ought to be claimed, and all the allowances for the exaggeration and want of discrimination of this style of composition, which we should be equally called to make in the *Philippics*, or the second Oration against Antony, or the speeches against Warren Hastings, there yet remains a substratum of truth and correct public principle at the bottom. The letter to the king, for example, seems to us to be not merely a masterpiece of composition, but to embody much of the early history of this reign in the same shape that later developments now show it to us. And if we concede much to the friends of the Dukes of Grafton and Bedford in condemning the malignant spirit with which he pursued those noblemen, on the other hand we must not deny that a portion of his censure was well merited. Even with respect to Lord Mansfield, where posterity will probably decide that he fails the most, the history of the times will go to show, that, however upright that nobleman may have been as a judge, he was as mischievous a politician as his timidity would let him be. His leanings were all on the side of absolutism, which made him lend to the whole ministerial policy of this period the weight of his authority and the countenance of his name. If, in attempting to counteract so dangerous and so powerful an influence, Junius, as well as a better man, Lord Chatham, occasionally exceeded the bounds of justice to their adversary, something must be pardoned in this case to the spirit of liberty. Their impulses were on the side of popular right, whilst those of the Judge, at least whilst sitting as a peer, betrayed something too much of servility to the crown. The same unfortunate tendency is visible in the course of another great legal authority in the House of Commons, Judge Blackstone. Junius put his shoulder to the wheel at a critical moment, and used all his might to overcome a strong combination against the progress of liberal principles, for which the world owes him a debt, as it does to Wilkes, without stopping to define the purity of his motives, or to decide whether he selected in every particular the most unexceptionable mode of proceeding.

For it will scarcely be disputed at this day, that the only sure way to George the Third's favor was to exalt the monarch's authority. It was the zeal nurtured by this idea that prompted the series of measures designed to crush Wilkes, and that led to the policy which ended in the American War. Of this last point there is fresh evidence furnished in the appendix to the present Memoirs, from the manuscripts of the Duke of Grafton. It would seem from his statement, that, when the ministry, in 1769, came to the final determination to repeal Charles Townshend's revenue act of 1767, the Duke himself, Lord Camden, Lord Granby, and General Conway, were overruled by a single vote upon the point of making the fatal exception of the duty on teas. Neither was that the sole error that spoiled the project of conciliation with America. It appears, that the famous circular letter of Lord Hillsborough to all the American governors was designed by the cabinet council to have been far more kind and lenient in its tone than it was as it finally appeared. Lord Camden directly charged Lord Hillsborough with an alteration of the letter, as not having been founded upon the original minute of the cabinet council, and as in opposition to its spirit. The correspondence that passed between them on the subject makes part of the appendix to the fourth volume ; from which it is tolerably certain, that Lord Hillsborough would hardly have ventured upon so bold a step as that of omitting in his letter the parts of the minute that might be soothing to the colonies, if he had not felt sure of the ear of royalty, and the concurrence of a power strong enough to keep down the complaints of the minority, who very justly felt wronged by the proceeding. The conduct of that minority was, under the circumstances, beyond measure weak. Instead of insisting upon the preservation of better faith, as the condition of retaining office, they submitted in silence, and suffered themselves to be removed one by one from their posts in the king's councils upon other pretences, without producing the slightest shock to the policy which they disapproved.

It may, however, very well be doubted, whether there ever was, at any time, in Great Britain an opportunity presented to stop the breach which was daily growing wider between the mother country and her colonies. From the day that Grenville proposed the Stamp Act, there was no sincere

disposition either in king or people to retract the policy. Every attempt made at conciliation only served to show, by the ungracious and vacillating manner in which it was done, at once the weakness of timidity and the hollowness of fraud. The repeal of the Stamp Act was clogged with a declaration claiming the rights that were in dispute. That was soon followed by Charles Townshend's revenue bill, which only modified the shape of exercising the authority claimed. Then succeeded a second repeal, with the single exception of the article of tea, sufficient to save the pride of the nation and turn all its wisdom into folly. There was no party in the country sufficiently strong to maintain any system whatever that was not agreeable to the king. There was not more than one statesman who fully comprehended what the true policy should have been, not one who could have executed it if he did. Very few knew any thing about the origin or history of the Colonists, their character, or their resources. They learned from the officers whom they employed that they were a people very troublesome to deal with, fond of money, and inclined to sedition ; that was all they wished to know. A regiment or two more was all the remedy necessary. These would traverse the country from one end to the other, to put down this insolent murmuring of a pack of bragging cowards, who resisted the constituted authority, relying for escape from the consequences upon their remoteness from its power, and the consciousness of their own insignificance. Such was the prevailing tone of sentiment in England previously to the American Revolution. The king held it, and from him it descended to the aristocracy and the people. Little wonder can there be that conciliation made such feeble and irregular progress. Even the concessions occasionally made were attended with circumstances of the most ungracious character to the people of the Colonies. Their remonstrances were not listened to ; their petitions were refused even a reception. Virginia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, though admitted to be unequally offenders, were treated alike with sovereign contempt. Their agents met scarcely a decent hearing. Lord Hillsborough treated Dr. Franklin with the most unbounded arrogance, refusing to receive him even on a levee-day. Wedderburn's invective against him in the presence of an approving and applauding Privy Council, upon the hearing of

the Massachusetts petition, is well known. "What, Sir, will become of this insolent town of Boston," says Mr. Hans Stanley, upon seconding the address, at the opening of parliament in 1768, "when we deprive the inhabitants of the power of sending out their rums and their molasses to the coast of Africa? For they must be treated like aliens; as they have treated us upon this occasion. It is the happiness of the people of Boston, that they are as unable to contend with us, as we are unwilling to contend with them. If this were not the case, the town would soon dwindle into a contemptible village." Lord Barrington, then secretary at war, in the same debate, "called the Americans traitors, worse than traitors, against the crown, — traitors against the legislature of Great Britain. He said the use of troops was to bring rioters to justice." Such are some of the flowers picked up at random out of the *Debates* now before us. "Where did Trecothick learn English?" once asked Dr. Johnson of Wilkes, supposing the person he referred to was an American. If such was the extent of information of one of the most learned men in England respecting the people of the revolted colonies, at a time when they had been year after year remonstrating and petitioning in tolerably fair English, where is the wonder that the conciliatory policy should have been deemed degrading by the generality of the nation? The author of *Taxation no Tyranny* knew no way of dealing with "those dictators of sedition," as he styles them, "who oppose the decrees of the general legislature with audacious defiance and acrimonious malignity," but to recommend "the use of such a force as might take away, not only the power, but the hope of resistance." The government, whilst believing itself following his advice, in time discovered that it had only helped to introduce into the family of nations a new one.

The mention of Dr. Johnson reminds us of the brief and caustic notice taken of him by Walpole in the work before us. It is in connection with the publication of another of his political pamphlets, that relating to the quarrel with Spain about the Falkland Islands, which government employed him to write in its defence against the attacks of Junius.

"Our ministers," he says, "triumphing in having avoided a war, set forth an exultation written by Dr. Samuel Johnson, and very abusive on the opposition, the Bill of Rights, Lord Chatham,

Junius, and the Lord Mayor, with most of their names at length, — the very kind of grievance of which the court complained. With a lumber of learning and some strong parts, Johnson was an odious and mean character. By principle a Jacobite, arrogant, self-sufficient, and overbearing by nature, ungrateful through pride, and of *feminine bigotry*, he had prostituted his pen to party even in a dictionary, and had afterwards, for a pension, contradicted his own definitions. His manners were sordid, supercilious, and brutal; his style ridiculously bombastic and vicious; and in one word, with all the pedantry, he had all the gigantic littleness, of a country schoolmaster." — Vol. iv., p. 297.

Luckily for the Doctor, the pages of Boswell place him so distinctly before posterity, that we know exactly how much and how little of this sketch it is proper to believe. The same good fortune does not always attend distinguished men who are described in these Memoirs, so that we are bound in justice to read what is said of them with the same degree of allowance we know how to make here. It cannot be denied that Walpole has hit a likeness; but it more resembles the exaggeration of caricature than the living man. Mr. Croker observes, that, in reference to the pensions granted to Johnson and to the notorious Dr. Shebbeare, it was drolly said at the time that "the king had pensioned a *She-bear* and a *He-bear*." Very certainly, Dr. Johnson had too much of that animal about him to make himself acceptable to so nice and dainty a gentleman as Horace Walpole. It is one of the singular practical inconsistencies which we so often meet with in life, to find the poor and despised and vulgar and rough author the great stickler for the powers of the crown and the aristocracy, whilst the child of fortune, who revelled from youth to age in the profits of sinecures and pensions to the tune of thirty thousand dollars *per annum*, was the sworn enemy of arbitrary rule, even to the extent of glorying in the execution of Charles the First. Yet in the daily observances of life there was a hundred times more of the republican in Johnson than in Walpole. The peculiarity of the former was a touching internal humility covered up by an arrogant and overbearing outside. That of the latter was unbounded pride, laboriously, but ineffectually, concealed under the artificial habits of good society. If the one was bigoted, yet his heart was open to religious influences that had their beneficial force over his

life and writings ; whilst the other lived and died like the grasshopper of the field, careless, if not unconscious, of the morrow that awaited him. However inclined we may be to find fault with Dr. Johnson, we cannot agree that he was either "an odious or a mean character." Neither are we very well satisfied, in a work professing to review the history of the first twelve years of George the Third, its literature as well as its politics, to find the notice of a man who has written so much and so well upon a great variety of subjects, the author of *London* and the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, the compiler of the first good dictionary of the language, the moralist and the critic, confined to an ill-natured paragraph about one of his most indifferent ephemeral political pamphlets.

The same objection, though not in equal degree, may be made to what Walpole has said of Burke. We recollect but little notice taken of any of his writings, excepting two pamphlets, one in reply to the tract entitled *The State of the Nation*, the other called *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*. Than this last, perhaps, no more able production to attain its purpose was ever written. The object was to make a platform for the Rockingham Whigs, upon which to stand at a moment when the country was split up into factions, but few of which could assign a higher reason for their policy than that common to all politicians and creditable to none, the being out of, and the desire to get into, office. It has been remarked by a high modern authority in such matters, that the Whig party dates the origin of its renovation from the new foundations laid whilst the Marquis of Rockingham was its acknowledged head. If this be true, the principles upon which it rests were declared in this pamphlet by Edmund Burke. Yet we find, strangely enough, our author vehement in his censure of it, and equally strong in his preference of the reply written by Catherine Macaulay. This judgment has been reversed by posterity. Burke's work is still read by all who wish to form an idea of the philosophy of politics ; whilst that of his lady adversary is so entirely sunk in oblivion, that the editor could not find even a single copy of it in any of the public libraries in England. In those particulars in which Walpole finds the most to blame, later evidence shows that Burke was in the right. He alone of all the public men of



the time seems to have formed a tolerably just view of the extent and duration of Lord Bute's influence ; whilst in his disavowal of Wilkes, and his separation from the factions of the city, he manifested a degree of judgment and of principle which is seldom found in a pamphlet written to serve a temporary purpose. The course of remarks upon party associations, and the rules by which every citizen should regulate his conduct in joining with or separating from them, is of universal application, and may be read with as much profit in America at this day as anywhere under the sun. But it bore too hard for the moment upon the conduct of General Conway, the Magnus Apollo of our author, for the latter to squeeze out any favorable judgment of its merit. Whatever may be our opinion of the Marquis of Rockingham, — and we must confess we cannot readily comprehend the cause of the submission paid to him at that, or of the regard shown to his memory at this time, by the English Whigs, — we consider him in every respect superior to Conway, whom Walpole in vain strove to puff up into greatness. He was of that class of men, — a very numerous one in all free countries, and nowhere more so than with us, and, wherever they may be, always deserving of contempt as politicians, — who, with good feelings and correct principles, suffer themselves to be perpetually drawn into measures which they know to be wrong, and into conduct they feel they cannot approve, either by a vacillating temper, never knowing where to make a stand, or by a selfish regard to their own interest, afraid to run the risk of declaring a dissent. We make these remarks in the full consciousness that General Conway lost his post in the army by voting against government in the condemnation of general warrants ; a sacrifice which would have been more to his credit, in our opinion, if he had never done any thing afterwards to restore himself.

But the remarks here made upon our author's comments on Johnson and Burke may with justice be extended to his notice of the literature of the time. Of all curious chapters that were ever written, that which forms the sixth of the third volume now seems to us among the most so. What praise of authors who have been entirely forgotten ! What slighting notice of those who now stand prominent ! What utter neglect of many of the best ! Mrs. Macaulay is more elaborately noticed than Dr. Robertson, and but a single

allusion is made to Hume. Dr. Goldsmith is less praised than Anstey, and Richard Bentley is preferred as a poet to Churchill ! A poem called *Rodondo*, by a Mr. Dalrymple, is spoken of as having uncommon merit ; whilst not a word is lisped of Gray, or Samuel Johnson, of Young, or Aken-side. Smollett is treated with contempt as the writer of *Humphrey Clinker*, which he by no means merits ; and last of all, Dr. Franklin is praised only for the *Farmer's Letters*, which he did not write. Such is the sum total of the literature of a period rich in literary men ; such, we fear, is too often the character of contemporary criticism. It had been well for the reputation of our author for acuteness and taste, had this chapter never been written. It very materially weakens the ground which, in a former article, we took in his defence.

We have no space left to make more than a passing observation upon the remarkable manner in which Walpole speaks of his niece, Lady Waldegrave, and her relations with the king's younger brother, the Duke of Gloucester. We had always supposed that there was a marriage, and we still believe the peerage-book, notwithstanding the doubts thrown upon it in these volumes. It is difficult precisely to understand the motive for his conduct in this instance. That Walpole's pride was flattered by the connection is tolerably manifest in his letters ; yet it is equally certain, that, from fear of being suspected of instigating the ambition of his niece, he interfered at the outset to prevent it. He says, indeed, that his "father's obligations to the royal family forbade him to endeavour to place a natural daughter of his house so near the throne" ; but we are at a loss to understand why this scruple should be pushed so far as to stand in the way of the acknowledgment of an honorable marriage, after it was decided upon, without his privity. Yet he continues his ambiguous language even to the last, as if it was not displeasing to him to record the doubtful position in which the lady was placed by the king's refusal to acknowledge her. For the rest, the match was a brilliant one only in point of rank. The Duke of Gloucester was naturally dull. His character, however, was respectable, which can scarcely be said for the king's two other brothers, the Dukes of York and Cumberland, or for the sister who was queen of Denmark. The education of princes is too often little more

than the assiduous cultivation of their vices. How far the princess dowager was to blame for the errors of her children we will not take it upon us to say. Her own life was by no means a fortunate one. Married under the expectation of ascending the British throne, she was suddenly deprived of all those prospects by her husband's death before he could come to the crown. The rest of her days were passed with a stigma resting upon her character, which made her name a byword of reproach throughout the nation while she lived, and which has left a cloud over her memory to this day. With her death, which took place early in 1772, the present volumes terminate ; of course, the American War is not embraced in the period of which they treat.

On the whole, Walpole's contribution to the history of Great Britain will not be without its value ; but whoever reads it must make great allowances for his habitual acrimony, and for his bitter personal enmities, the offspring of his prejudices and his passions. The character of no individual, male or female, should be estimated by his unsupported testimony. With much truth that will be found confirmed by the relations of others, there is enough of error proved to have been committed by him to render his narrative alone, even though guarded by the labors of both his editors, by no means a perfectly safe guide.

---

ART. II. — *Michelet's History of France*. Translated by G. H. SMITH, F. G. S. New York : Appleton & Co. Vol. I. 1846. 8vo.

EVERY student of history knows that a few periods only are worthy of careful and continued attention ; if these are well understood, the times between them are also ; but if they remain in darkness, the whole tale of the world's doings remains a puzzle and a mystery. And this is equally true, whether we read for mere amusement, or to learn the principles of national growth, or to become acquainted with the heroes and the monsters of our race. Hampdens and Washingtons appear at such epochs ; and at such also come into view the Mirabeaus, the Robespierres, and the Benedict Ar-